

Commerce And Industry. Samuel G Smith. Hillsboro. W. Va. Pocahontas Co.  
Tilt-hammer.

On January 9th 1835 William Cochran bought 44 acres from John and Mary Buckley of Buckeyn or at that time known as Buckeye Cove the deed was witnessed by William Young, R. Armentrout and John Gilford the Buckleys appeared before William Cackley and William Gibson on April 17 1835 and had these two gentlemen to swear them to the papers as Gibson and Cackley were Justice of the Peace and was recorded by H.M Moffett Clerk.

After settling here Cochran went to work to earn a living and he being a blacksmith decided to put in a Tilt-hammer which was run by water-power by harnessing Swago Creek, he dug a race from the upper end of what is known as the Shelton place to the lower end or about opposite the N.O Rogers home of today and it was here that he built his Tilt-hammer with which he made Horse Shoes, horse shoe nails, rod iron or in fact most anything anybody wanted that could be made of ~~it~~ iron and this iron was hauled in by wagon and team from where ever he could get it as steel at that time was very hard to get and came in large pieces that required lots of work to work it down.

This tilt-hammer worked from the waterwheel soon as the water was turned on the hammer started in a striking manner and with the anvil directly under you had a heavy striking force, the iron was heated and the hammers in motion all the attendant had to do was turn the iron in the desired position and it was in this manner that the nails and shoes were made and anything else he received an order for and ~~it was~~ his shoes and nails were bought by farmers from Swago and the surrounding territory and this was one of the first industries in Pocahontas County.

Cochran sold out on Swago Creek and moved to Stony Creek in 1859 and Anthony (Tone) Lightner operated the Tilt-hammer for a short time making iron wedges, horse shoes, and nails that he sold but about 1861 he quit blacksmithing and went to Clarksburg and did some work during the war and died and was buried there.

Information-Willis McKeever and John C McNeill Buckeye. W. Va.

Nancy A McNeill, John B Buckley, & A.W Lightner. " "

Court Record Marlinton. W. Va.



West Virginia Writers' Project  
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Calvin Price. Marlinton

Source G. D & John C McNeill Buckeye.

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John B Buckley & Willis McKeever  
Buckeye. W. Va.

Court Records. Marlinton. W. Va.



Have been gathering information on this operation for some time but was not able to finish until this time.

Mr. Calvin Price requested that this powder mill operation be written up and sent in for publication in the history.



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Thomas McNeill was born 1747 and died 1808<sup>1803</sup> and was a pioneer settler in Pocahontas County as he settled on Swago Creek in 1768 and married Mary Hughes, took up what was known as a tomahawk claim from the Indians and lived on what is a part of the McClintic farm today (one of my informants John C McNeill tells me that Thomas had learned the powder trade from his father as it seemed to be a trade carried on by the McNeills even in Scotland before they came to America, and that as soon as he got located here he began to make gunpowder. ))

In 1770 Jonathan his son was born and he too learned the powder trade from his father, he married Pheobe Moore the daughter of Moses Moore on Stony Creek and they put in a Grist Mill at what is now the entrance to the McClintic farm, built a stone house where he had a loom that he wove with also he made dyes and was noted for his famous Indigo Blue. at the same time he put in a powder plant or mill on what is known as the Shelton place.

To make this powder required sulphur, charcoal and saltpeter the sulphur he got from Staunton Va. and transported it in to this county on pack horses, the charcoal he got from burning willow wood or could use buckeye wood but not so good, the saltpeter he got was from the salt petre cave on the McClintic farm and not far from the residence of Lee Overholt, this was gotten from the rich limestone soil found in this particular cave, this earth he put in to a hopper like the old ash hopper and poured water over it caught the contents and boiled it down and had the finished product salt petre. After this he took the three and mixed them together and this mixing was done by water power after it was thoroughly mixed and dried it was put through a grinding process and one day he had put in a portion to grind and according to my informants (Calvin Price, J.C & G.D McNeill) it was always thought some mischievous boys put a piece of flint in the mill and when the owner was about half way to the house going for dinner the whole thing blew up mill and powder and all.

Upon interviewing John C McNeill he tells me that it was his impre-



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- Gun Powder-

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ion that Thomas furnished gun powder to the soldiers of the Revolutionary  
war, and that Jonathan furnished it for the war of 1812 but G.D McNeill says  
he never heard this but it could be.

They sold this powder to the neighbors and traded it for corn and  
wheat and it is possible that some of it was traded to the Indians as this  
powder operation was the only industry in this section at that time.

Jonathan had a loom and wove lincy that was used in the making of  
dresses and other garments for women, he wove genes for mens shirts and  
trousers they also wove Coverlets and some of these are found today at the  
home of John C McNeill a decendant of Thomas and Jonathan McNeill, Jonathan  
spent a great deal of his time in the old stone house experimenting with  
coloring material and as he was known far and near as the weaver and dyer  
as well as the man who made gunpowder. A grist mill was run in connection  
with the powder plant and in his will Oct. 13. 1825 he willed to his wife  
Phoebe Moore McNeill his grist mill and she had to run it day and night  
to avoid grinding on the sabbath she was known near and far as the honest  
miller. John McNeill a son of Jonathan was born 1792 and he to made powder  
and sold it among his neighbors. so it seemed to be a trade that each gen-  
eration took up as we have here three different generations that made  
powder some just for their own use while others made it in quantity for  
sale and trade with the help of the water power they were able to mix and  
grind it in quantity and were able to supply the demand at all times.

From all the information obtainable this powder plant was in

~~the~~ operation in the last of the seventeenth century and carried on up in  
the eighteenth century by the McNeills at this same location, the Shelton  
place on Swago Creek. This and the old grist mill along with the stone  
house used for weaving and dyeing is a historical landmark of this County.  
G.D McNeill, A.W McNeill are some of the older McNeills  
living in and near Buckeye that are direct decendants as well as the dec-  
endants of M.W. (Dock) William C .E.G, James McNeill .

Information. Court Records Marlinton, W. Va. G.D McNeill. Buckeye. W. Va.  
Willis McEever. Buckeye and John B Buckley Buckeye. John C McNeill Buckeye.